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DEPARTMENT FOR IO/UNESCO AND EUR/CE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/16/2019

TAGS: [PREL UNESCO EG AU](#)

SUBJECT: AUSTRIA CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC ON FERRERO-WALDNER'S
CHANCES IN UNESCO DG RACE

REF: A. PARIS 1137 B. VIENNA 1089

Classified By: Economics/Political Counselor Dean Yap for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (U) In a Sept. 14 meeting with Econ/Pol Counselor and Poloff, Austrian MFA Director for International Organizations Peter Huber expressed "some optimism" about Austrian candidate Benita Ferrero-Waldner's chances. Given that she was the last to declare, Huber thought the GOA had done reasonably well in lining up support. Huber acknowledged that Egyptian Cultural Minister Farouk Hosni remained the frontrunner, but felt that Ferrero-Waldner had successfully positioned herself as the best alternative. As others have predicted (ref A), Huber felt that Hosni's best opportunity to secure the UNESCO DG position would be the first round.

12. (C) In response to a question, Huber said that the presence of three EU candidates had made it impossible to come with an EU consensus candidate, but he predicted that certainly "after the second round, but it could be after the first round," the EU would unite around one candidate. He added that the Council has agreed EU members should support one candidate at most after the second round of voting. Huber acknowledged that Ferrero-Waldner's chances are complicated by the fact that in UNESCO the EU is largely divided between two regional groups and that the Eastern Europe group has never held the DG position. Huber remarked that based on the tepid African Union statement from Sirte about Hosni's candidacy and his own observations, "even Africa is not 100 percent behind Hosni."

13. (SBU) Comment: The MFA's guarded optimism that Ferrero-Waldner has positioned herself as the best alternative to Hosni comports with previous analyses. Austria's successful run for a UNSC non-permanent seat gave the MFA plenty of experience in UN electioneering, but the MFA spent nearly two years on the UNSC bid compared to a few months for the UNESCO race. Ferrero-Waldner has reportedly picked up some European and Latin American support, and her hope remains that she can survive her late entry and possible preference for a regional rotation in order to win the prize.
End comment.

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